The Impact of the Use of New Communications and Information Technologies on Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation

Role of Marriage Agencies in Trafficking in Women

and

Trafficking in Images of Sexual Exploitation

Donna M. Hughes
University of Rhode Island, USA

The Group of Specialists on the Impact of the Use of New Information Technologies on Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation (EG-S-NT)

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Research Questions and Methods

This report is a supplement to the previous report "The Impact of the Use of New Communications and Information Technologies on Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation: A Study of the Users" (May 2001).

The research questions addressed in this report are:

> 1) What is the use of new information and communication technologies for trafficking of adult persons (above 18 years of age) for the purpose of sexual exploitation (in particular recruitment of persons and exploitation of trafficked persons);
>
> 2) What are the existing practices concerning trafficking of images of adult persons (i.e. the cases of persons who do not leave physically the country but are exploited sexually and the resulting images are distributed on Internet).

At the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the Impact of the Use of New Information Technologies on Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation (EG-S-NT) in Strasbourg, France in June 2001, the committee suggested that I focus more attention on the role of marriage agencies/introduction services (sometimes referred to as mail-order-bride agencies) in the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.

For this report, I gathered information from the following sources: 1) Web based marriage agencies operating in countries of the former Soviet Union; 2) reports written by law enforcement personnel, researchers, and nongovernmental organizations; and 3) information gathered from people setting up Internet based sex sites in Eastern Europe.

Several factors limited the amount of information I was able to find. 1) The requests for information I sent out followed only several months behind the first requests. Previous contacts were not able to provide more information that they did last spring. They did not have any new cases in which new technologies were used. 2) Following September 11, 2001, several contacts in law enforcement agencies responded that they were now investigating terrorism and didn't know when they would return to investigating trafficking in persons. 3) The lack of awareness of the possible involvement of marriage agencies or introduction services in the trafficking in women. 4) The lack of recognition of the harm of trafficking images on the Internet, and/or the lack of awareness that women are sometimes forced into making pornographic images or videos.

Secondary to this report, but of subsequent importance, is the possibility that the shift in focus from trafficking to terrorism may become permanent for law enforcement agencies. Although anti-terrorism investigations are of legitimate high priority, it raises concern that trafficking investigations may receive less attention in the future, just at the time when it seemed they were finally drawing the attention they require.

As with the first report, the information I was able to gather is only partial. The data gathered provides more information, background, and detail on how traffickers may operate, and where additional research and investigations might focus, but none of it is conclusive in making all the links between recruitment, trafficking, and exploitation of women in the sex industry.

Role of Marriage Agencies in Trafficking in Women

One of the questions that arises in considering the trafficking of the 10,000s of women into Western Europe is how they are recruited by traffickers and/or pimps. There have been many documented cases of women being deceived by traffickers after the women responded to employment advertisements. This report addresses the involvement of marriage agencies in trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Some NGOs consider the "bride trade" to be a form of trafficking in women in and of itself because its operation depends on an inequality of power between men and women. The bride trade is based on recruiting women from regions of poverty and high employment, and the marketing of women based on sexual, racial, and ethnic stereotypes. The men seeking companions or wives through this route often express their desire for women who are interested in fulfilling traditional family roles. A review of the marriage or introduction agencies that operate on the Internet reveals the sometimes subtle, but often blatant, sexualized photographs of the women are used to appeal to men. The descriptions of the women claim they are oriented towards pleasing men.

There have been numerous cases in Western Europe and the United States of women who met men through marriage agencies and became victims of domestic violence, and in some cases, victims of extreme sexual slavery. Also, there have been murders of "mail-order-brides" by violent partners. Some activists and NGOs suspect that women who find Western partners through marriage agencies are at higher risk of becoming victims of violence and exploitation, but there is not enough data or research to substantiate that. This remains a valid unanswered question.

In St. Petersburg, the Psychological Crisis Center for Women reports that they have heard of women recruited by marriage agencies being trafficked into the sex industry, but they had not worked directly with such a case. They said they knew of women recruited by marriage agencies who were used as surrogate mothers, or brought to Western countries while pregnant to give birth to their babies, then deported to Russia.[1]

In countries where recruitment of women by marriage or introduction agencies is popular, the general public does not understand the risk of signing up with these agencies. A NGO worker in St. Petersburg said that her mother was urging her to sign up. She said her mother said, "Why waste your time with that work. Why not correspond with a Western man and find a better life?" She said she knew of cases in which mothers accompany their daughters to marriage agencies to sign them up, when the daughters are too afraid to go alone.[2]

There was some indication that traffickers may use the Internet to recruit women. A report by the Denmark Police noted suspicious advertisements for nannies, waitresses, and dancers on

[1] Interview, St. Petersburg Psychological Crisis Center, 18 August 2001.

[2] Interview, St. Petersburg Psychological Crisis Center, 18 August 2001.

Web site in Latvia and Lithuania.[3] The significance of these advertisements in the recruitment of women was disputed. Some thought that so few girls and women have Internet access in Latvia and Lithuania, especially in the poor, rural areas from which many girls and women are recruited, that this could not be an effective recruitment tool. Others thought that almost all girls and women have access to the Internet through schools and libraries, where they may go to search for work abroad.[4]

The recruitment of women by marriage agencies may be a way to facilitate women's access to the Internet. For example, in Riga, Latvia one of the largest marriage agencies in the world, Foreign Affairs, has a franchise in Mystic Café. In the café, women access the Internet to correspond with men who have subscribed to the service.[5] Other marriage agencies provide Internet access at their offices so women can correspond with men who pay additional fees for conversations with women.

In these cases, marriage agencies themselves may not be involved in trafficking, but are providing access to the Internet and contacts in the West that may increase the likelihood of women corresponding with or meeting traffickers.

Recruitment of Women by Marriage Agencies in Countries of the Former Soviet Union

Research on Internet based marriage or introduction agencies was undertaken to investigate the role of marriage agencies in the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. Since this type of research had not been done before, it wasn't clear at the beginning what we would be able to find or the significance of the findings. General questions that we hoped to address were:

1. How many Internet-based marriage or introduction agencies are operating in the countries of the former Soviet Union?
2. How many women have been recruited by these agencies?
3. Are there certain countries, regions, and cities from which women are being recruited?
4. Are these the same countries, regions, and cities from which women are known to be trafficked into sex industries?
5. Are marriage or introduction agencies involved in trafficking women for sexual exploitation?

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[3] Denmark Police, *Report on the 'Fact-Finding Mission' conducted in November 2000 by the National Commissioner of the Police for the Baltic Countries Regarding Trafficking in Women*, 2000.

[4] Interview, Lisbet Jörgensen, Denmark Police, 2 May 2001.

[5] Jorgen Johannson, "Down at the love-trade hotel," *The Baltic Times*, 10-16 May 2001.

During summer 2001, searches on the Web found almost 500 marriage agency sites with women from former Soviet Countries. Two hundred and nineteen (219) Web sites with women from countries of the former Soviet Union were indexed. A database was constructed with the following information from each Web site:

1. Url of the Web site,
2. Web site name,
3. US or European address of the agency,
4. City and country location and/or address of the agency in former Soviet country
5. Email address, telephone and fax number
6. Price for addresses of women and/or membership fee for men to join the club
7. Destination of tours, if arranged by the agency
8. Additional relevant information, such as availability of video tapes or nude pictures of women, obvious connections to the sex industry

The 219 agencies that were indexed are representative of those found on the Web. They include large agencies with 1000s of women listed and very small agencies with just a few dozen women listed. We made an effort to include agencies from diverse locations, especially those outside large cities. Some agencies, the largest ones, included women from almost all of the former Soviet countries; other agencies were regional and included only women from one city or oblast.

From each of the Web sites, the number of women from each city, oblast and country was entered in the database. A total of almost 120,000 women were counted from these sites. Efforts were made to avoid over counting. There were several Web sites that compiled women from other sites or agencies. These duplications were not counted.

There was a large range of numbers of women from each country. (See Table 1 and Map 1) The fifteen countries of the former Soviet Union can be divided into three distinct categories for the recruitment of women by marriage or introduction agencies: High, Medium, and Low. Although there are very large differences in the size and populations of these 15 countries, there are still very large differences in the recruitment of women by marriage agencies in these countries. The High category with the largest numbers of women were the Russian Federation with over 62,000 women, followed by Ukraine with almost 32,000, and Belarus with almost 13,000. There were a few Medium range countries with a few thousand women: Kazakhstan (3,037), Kyrgyzstan (4,190), Latvia (1,760), and Uzbekistan (1,139). The rest in the Low category had less than 1000 women, Azerbaijan (204), Estonia (551), Lithuania (626), Moldova (884), and a few countries had less than a couple of dozen women, Armenia (23), Georgia (7), Tajikistan (8), and Turkmenistan (25).

Table 1

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies from Countries of the Former Soviet Union

Armenia	23
Azerbaijan	204
Belarus	12,683
Estonia	551
Georgia	7
Kazakhstan	3037
Kyrgyzstan	4190
Latvia	1760
Lithuania	626
Moldova	884
Russian Federation	62,605
Tajikistan	8
Turkmenistan	25
Ukraine	31,837
Uzbekistan	1,139
Unknown	70
Total	**119,649**

The three countries in the High category (Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus) were categorized by the number of women recruited in each oblast on the 219 Web sites.

In the Russian Federation, there were very large differences in the number of women recruited from each oblast. (See Table 2 and Map 2) Fewer than ten women had been recruited from thirteen of the oblasts. Fewer than 100 women had been recruited from 41 of the oblasts. Only ten oblasts had more than 1,000 women. St. Petersburg, with by far the highest number, almost 16,000, represented almost three to four times the number of women recruited compared to the next closest oblasts – Moscow with over 3,600 and Volgograd with almost 4,900.

Although there are considerable differences in population among the oblasts, the size of the difference in recruitment numbers most likely represents the activity of recruiters and how marriage or introduction agencies are viewed.

Table 2

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in the Russian Federation by Oblast

Adygea	18	Moscow	3642
Alania	4	Murmansk	43
Altai	73	Nizhniy Novgorod	178
Amur	25	Novgorod	502
Arkhangelsk	253	Novosibirsk	655
Astrakhan'	429	Omsk	731
Bashkortostan	440	Orel Oblast	72
Belgorod	86	Orenburg	96
Birobijan	3	Penza	311
Bryansk	69	Mordovia	14
Buryatia	15	Perm	221
Chelyabinsk	474	Primorskiy	645
Chita	3	Pskov	55
Chukot	2	Rostov	1044
Chuvashia	154	Ryazan'	282
Dagestan	8	Sakhalin	178
Irkutsk	133	Samara	1510
Ivanovo	32	Saratov	2344
Kabardino-Balkaria	22	Smolensk	23
Kaliningrad	295	St. Petersburg	15694
Kalmykia	2	Stavropol	365
Kaluga	72	Sverdlovsk	2003
Kamchatka	27	Tambov	111
Karachay-Cherkessia	4	Tatarstan	2165
Karelia	49	Taymyr	31
Kemerovo	173	Tomsk	235
Khabarovsk	313	Tula	43
Khakassia	7	Tuva	1
Khanty-Mansi	41	Tver	1373
Kirov	26	Tyumen	159
Komi	203	Udmurtia	317
Komi-Permyak	1	Ul'yanovsk	280
Kostroma	10	Vladimir	58
Krasnodar	834	Volgograd	4897
Krasnoyarsk	175	Vologda	60
Kurgan	82	Voronezh	121
Kursk	27	Yakutia	21
Lipetsk	82	Yamalo-Nenets	2
Magadan	22	Yaroslavl	64
Mari-El	1869	Not Known	14967
		Total	**62605**

There were sizeable differences in the number of women recruited by oblast in Ukraine also. (See Table 3 and Map 3.) In Ukraine there are a few distinct patterns for the recruitment of women by marriage agencies. Generally, the oblasts with the lowest number of recruited women are in the western Ukraine. Oblasts with large cities, such as the capital Kiev, Odessa, and Dnipropetrovsk, have large numbers of women in the marriage agencies. The Crimea has the largest number of women recruited (5,515), and the other oblasts on or near the Black Sea have fairly high numbers of women recruited from them.

Table 3

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Ukraine, by Oblast

Cherkas'ka	149	Mykolayiv	533
Chernivhivs'ka	35	Odessa	3225
Chernivitsi	268	Poltava	368
Dnipropetrovsk	2742	Respublika Krym	5515
Donetsk	1055	Rivnens'ka	2
Ivano-Frankivsk	10	Sums'ka	1994
Kharkivs'ka	1188	Ternopil'	12
Khersons'ka	1053	Vinnytsya	440
Khmelnyts'ka	28	Volyns'ka	24
Kiev	3401	Zakarpats'ka	46
Kirovohrads'ka	10	Zaporizhzhya	539
Luhans'ka	281	Zhytomyr	125
L'viv	41	Unknown	8753
		Total	**31837**

The oblasts of Belarus also show considerable variation in the number of women recruited, with a low of 33 in Hrodzyenskaya to two oblasts, Homyelskaya and Minsk, having over 4,000. (See Table 4 and Map 4).

Table 4

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Belarus, by Oblast

Brest	202
Homyel'skaya	4905
Hrodzyenskaya	33
Mahilyowskaya	229
Minsk	4303
Vitsyebskaya	740
Unknown	2271
Total	**12,683**

Sexually Exploitative Services Offered Through Marriage Agencies

Of the 219 marriage or introduction agency Web sites, 78 of them offered tours to meet women. Although most marriage agency Web sites make money by selling contact information to men, there are a few that only operate as introduction services (they don't sell address or facilitate correspondence). The men have to travel to the city, and then the agency will introduce them to women. MarriageTrip.com in Tver, Russia is one example.[6]

While some of the agencies have a narrow focus of introducing potential marriage partners, other agencies offer pornographic and prostitution services. The following are some examples:

- The Darling Marriage Agency in Sebastopol, Ukraine also offers "escort services."[7]
- The Allure Marriage Agency in Astrakhan, Russia offers "private nude photosessions of Russian models from the Russian Model Agency."
- The Savva La Belle Web site offers to take photographs or/and videos of a woman including "nude" and "skin flick."

A number of the Web sites provide models for pornographers. The Russian Erotic Model Agency offers men the opportunity to come to Russia on "erotic tours" and take pornographic pictures of the women.

> *If you are a photographer or an artist or just an ordinary person who appreciates beauty and can enjoy it, then our Russian Erotic Tour is your chance. It's a great opportunity to take photos of our models. Visiting Russia you'll be able to get acquainted with a great amount of Russian girls. It'll allow you to take photos of many pearls. Even if you don't know how to use a camera, our tour will include special Photo Training Course, our top models will pose for you. They'll do everything you wish of desire. Your photo cameras will imprint the most intimate sites.*[8]
>
> *Our girls are not flippant or professional models. They are just beautiful, charming and sexy girls who will value you. They are not simply beautiful and traditional in their values, they want to guess your desire and give you the greatest revelation. Russia is great because women here haven't been spoiled, there are no other businesses like Russian Erotic Model Agency here and 80% of our girls have never even talked to a Western man. The women in our agency are well-educated Russian girls with good manners. They will make you feel wonderful...*[9]

Several of the Web sites include nude photos of the women. Some of the Web sites seem to be fully integrated into the sex industry. One example is the Russian Girls on the Web that

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[6] MarriageTrip.com, http://www.marriagetrip.com/index.cfm, Accessed 6 July 2001.

[7] Darling Marriage Agency, http://darling-agency.hypermart.net/, Accessed 25 June 2001.

[8] Russian Erotic Model Agency, http://rema.nm.ru/, Accessed 26 June 2001.

[9] Russian Erotic Model Agency, http://rema.nm.ru/, Accessed 26 June 2001.

offers Russian brides, escort services, Russian porn, and Russian amateurs (pornographic photos of Russian women). The site claims that "Only REAL Russian girls from Saint-Petersburg can be seen on our website."[10] There are links that connect to typical sex industry sites.

It is not known if any of these marriage or introduction agencies are involved in trafficking in women into sex industries in other countries. There are a number of aspects of these types of agencies that indicate that they are likely to be involved. 1) They have recruited a number of women who have indicated a desire to travel abroad or emigrate; 2) The women are single and able to move, although some of them may have children; 3) The women may have tried corresponding with men, meeting Western men on tours at "socials" sponsored by the agencies, and now be more willing to go abroad if they agency makes them an offer.

Also, some of the agencies on the Web site are operating other businesses that facilitate the travel and trafficking of women. In Chelyabinsk, Russia, an NGO representative said that the traffickers operate in travel agencies, with each agency specializing in one particular country where women are sent.[11] In St. Petersburg, an NGO representative said that marriage agencies are well organized business and "well protected" legally and by the political-business-criminal networks. As in Chelyabinsk, the same people who own marriage agencies also own foreign travel and employment agencies, some of which are known to be traffickers.

Due to poverty, high unemployment, and a belief in Western utopias, many women want to go abroad. NGOs report that in many cases, once a woman decides the solution to her problems is to go abroad, she will try every agency or strategy, regardless of the risk. The Angel Coalition interviewed a young woman who wants to go abroad. She said:

> *I want to live separately from my parents. I want to buy things. I'm sick and tired of everything. Why should it be a bad experience? I will go illegally. I will be fine. Even if it is not easy, I will try. One of my friends went abroad with this agency. She went to Germany on a tourist visa.*[12]

On some of the Web sites, multiple services are provided for men: correspondence with women, tours to meet women, introduction and escort services, and travel agencies. The following is one example.

Virginia! is an agency that offers a combination of services, most of which are aimed at facilitating men's interaction with women. The services offered to men also include a high level of monitoring of the women's lives. In the Mari-El Republic, Russia, the Maksim Introductions Agency also operates the Virginia Mari-El Travel Agency.[13] The marriage agency offers to assist men by arranging travel for the women of their choice. The tour

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[10] Russian Girls on the Web, http://girls.incom.ru/, Accessed 15 July 2001.

[11] Interview, Larisa Vasileyeva, 21st Century Women, Chelyabinsk, Russia, 15 August 2001.

[12] Angel Coalition video on prevention of trafficking in women.

[13] Virginia Mari-El Travel Agency, http://www.yoshkar-ola.com/travel/other/thoughts.html, Accessed 19 June 2001.

agency offers tours for Russian women to Turkey, Cyprus, Europe, Jamaica, and Bulgaria. The agency assists the women in obtaining visas. Almost all of these services are marketed to men, so they are expected to pay for all the services for the women.

The agency offers English language and custom courses for local women. Men can pay to enroll women in the classes. The agency will send periodic progress reports to the men.

> *Dear gentlemen,*
> *You have a great opportunity to follow your lady's schedule of her English classes. You can also address any questions or comments you have directly to your lady's English teacher about her progress and curriculum.*

This agency also runs a "digital studio" to provide photographs and videos of the women to the men. One service offers to follow the woman for one week to photograph her in "the world, which surrounds her every day. You can see what books she likes to read, what films she likes to watch, what juice she likes to drink, what place she likes to walk at." Men are also offered "sexy" photographs of the women.

> *If you order 'sexy' photos of a lady (in lingerie, in a swimming suit, or even without it), you are responsible for any consequences. We explain women that this word does not have a negative connotation in English (as in Russian) and means 'attracting men, pointing out woman's figure and beauty'. Most women, especially younger ones, understand the difference, however the agency is not liable for any changes in your relationships which may be caused by your request for 'sexy' photos. You may order them only if you have a firm agreement with your lady.*

The Mari-El Travel Agency offers to send women to meet men in other countries. If men don't want to travel to Russia, or don't want the problem of getting a visa, the agency will arrange to send a woman to another country to meet the man. Under the heading "Meeting CIS women in a third country," a British man describes paying the agency $1000 to "arrange the travel and accommodation for ten days together in our chosen 'mid-point,' Prague. And that happened. They booked her on a tour…."[14] The Web site also suggests that men can avoid the extra effort of getting a visa for himself and the woman by meeting the women in a country where neither of them needs a visa, or can get a Shengen visa.[15]

Although there is no evidence that this particular agency is trafficking women, one can see how this combination of services could easily be used for that purpose.

Marriage Agencies Recruitment of Vulnerable Populations

There are a few marriage agencies on the Web that either specialize in or include women or girls from especially vulnerable populations.

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[14] "Meeting CIS women in the third country," Virginia Mari-El Travel Agency, http://www.yoshkar-ola.com/travel/other/thoughts.html, Accessed: 19 June 2001.

[15] Shengen Visa are issued for stays up to 90 days and are valid for the following countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain.

One agency offering marriage agency services is a Russian government social service agency. The Family Social Assistance Center, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Social Assistance, has a typical marriage agency Web site linked to it. The agency, located in Rostov-on-Don, provides medial and social assistance to "families with disabled children, single-parent families, large families, and other vulnerable layers of the population." Services they provide include "psychological consulting both to children and adults," and "legal assistance to the women suffering domestic/sexual/societal" violence. The agency also provides "assistance to the lonely people inside Russia and all over the world in creating families though Internet." The link is to their marriage agency.[16] The descriptions of the women do not say they have previously been abused, although there are a number of women whose average age is higher than most marriage agency Web sites.

Several of the Web sites have underage girls listed as potential correspondents or wives. The marriage agency Valerie! in Chisinau, Moldova has a 14 year old girl on the Web site.[17] The Romeo and Juliet Ukrainian Marriage Agency located in Kherson, Ukraine had girls listed as being 15 and 16 years of age.[18] The Informedia Marriage Agency has contact addresses for girls aged 10, 14, and 16.[19] The Premier Matrimonial Agency in Odessa, Ukraine had contact information for several underage girls (aged 10, 12, 14 and 15) and a boy (aged 15). The 14-year-old girl is described as a "young and slim girl."[20]

There are also Web sites offering introduction services and pornography of women with disabilities. One site called Frantana Russian Amputee Ladies is a marriage and introduction agency to women with missing limbs.[21] The services are marketed to men with fetishes for missing limbs and stumps of amputated limbs or congenital malformations. According to an amputee pornographer, "The shorter the stump is, the sexier an amputee."[22] The photographs on the Web site range from modest to sexualized. The descriptions of the women often include pledges of loyalty to a man who will take care of them. On the same Web site are photographs of orphans with disabilities. Viewers are urged to send gifts or adopt them.

Women and orphans with disabilities are extremely vulnerable. The loss of the social supports following the collapse of the Soviet Union has not doubt severely worsened the circumstance for many. It would be wonderful to think of ways that people could support these women and children, but after viewing this site, one is left with a sick feeling for how they maybe exploited and abused by men who offer to marry or adopt them.

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[16] Family Social Assistants Center Marriage Agency, http://www.fsac.don.ru/marriage/, Accessed: 22 August 2001.

[17] Valerie! http://www.fortunecity.com/marina/pitcairn/89/english/index.htm, Accessed: 29 June 2001.

[18] Romeo and Juliet Ukrainian Marriage Agency, http://romeojuliet.com, Accessed 6 July 2001.

[19] Informedia Marriage Agency, http://members.tripod.com/infmedia/, Accessed 10 July 2001.

[20] Premier Matrimonial Agency, http://premier-agency.hypermart.net/Odessa.htm, Accessed 6 July 2001.

[21] Frantana Russian Amputee Ladies, http://www.frantana.aha.ru/, Accessed 6 July 2001.

[22] Rita Mohel, "Amputee Pros appeared in our capital," *Moskovskij Komsomolets*, 29 January 2000.

One Russian woman amputee went to the U.S. to marry a prison guard who wanted a wife with a disability. After meeting him in Moscow, she returned to the U.S. with him on a tourist visa. Upon her arrival in the U.S., he locked her in the house. She could not speak English and did not know the address of the house. She said he eventually sent her back to Russia. Now, she has a business of exploiting other Russian women with disabilities by recruiting them for disability pornography. Tatiana Volkova specializes in introduction services and videos for men she refers to as "sexual minorities." She uses the Internet to promote her services and products. "Special match making agencies to meet disabled appeared in the countries of the West with Internet's development… it became a real industry: videos are made by professional movie makers and cameramen." Volkova arranges "match-making meetings [for] foreigners [who] pay her money."

> *These people aren't maniacs or freaks. We didn't meet dangerous or crazy among them, although many of them seem to be strange, even unpleasant. They are frightened a little bit. They are a little bit ashamed of their special attraction. Many of them try to make us believe that they are not interested in amputees, they just came to Russia to visit our country. But we can read everything on their faces.*[23]

In an interview, Volkova says her "real dream" is to set up a brothel in Sochi, Russia with "amputee prostitutes."

> *She'll make it in a nice way for it not to look like it really is and she'll find the girls who'd like to be there. She'll buy land near Sochi, where she'll open a free "rehabilitation center" for amputees. She'll hire teachers of music and foreign languages for girls not to look so cheap, they'll have good meals and entertainments, and to pay for all these things they'll have only to spend time with their guests and to stay in this house for a couple of years. She already hired a lawyer and her agents started to look for candidates …*[24]

It is difficult to know how many of these agencies are providing the services they claim of selling addresses, and how many are involved in the activities that meet the criminal definition of trafficking in women. Certainly, most are promoting the sexual exploitation of Eastern European women by Western men.

[23] Mohel, 29 January 2000.

[24] Mohel, 29 January 2000.

Trafficking in Images of Sexual Exploitation

There have been numerous reports to NGOs in all parts of the world of nude or pornographic images of women being put on the Internet without their permission and with harmful intent. Some law enforcement agents who specialize in cybercrime are becoming increasingly aware of the harm done to victims by the new technologies. An official at the Internet Monitoring Service, National Police Headquarters, Hungary said the following about the use of new technologies for the trafficking of women:

> *I think this is a serious enough problem, that needs attention, it must be dealt with. It is already clear that certain groups of criminals begin to realize the importance of this issues, and use this technology not only on the level of trafficking in human beings, but also on the level of domestic exploitation of the victims as well.* [25]

At this point, most of the incidents that have been documented would be considered part of domestic violence. The men posting the images are usually former partners of the women who are attempting to harm or blackmail the victim. Two examples follow:

> In St. Petersburg, Russia, the former partner of a woman posted a photograph of the woman with a message and contact information in several locations on the Internet. The messages read:
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> > *Charming blond; nice body; wants sex and money; let's meet!; at my place or yours!; not expensive, anal-just adore; call me at _____*
> >
> > *Charming girl is looking for a hungry man; orgasm and tenderness is guarantee; massage, secret, erotic, anal, as you order; cheap*
>
> The contact information was correct, so the woman received many calls from men asking to meet her for sex. She reported this to the police, and they laughed. She asked the St. Petersburg Psychological Crisis Center for Women for assistance, but they could not get the police to take the case seriously or to intervene for the victim.[26]
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> In Bulgaria, a program to assist victims of domestic violence received a report that a woman's former partner blackmailed her by posting nude photographs of her on the Internet.[27]

An NGO in Denmark who works with victims of prostitution, pornography, and trafficking described the harm done to women. They say that the new capabilities of the Internet further the harm to victims.

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[25] Tibor Pszleg, National Police Headquarters, Internet Monitoring Service, Hungary, Spring 2001.

[26] Interview, St. Petersburg Psychological Crisis Center for Women, 18 August 2001

[27] Nada Kozhouharova, Animus Association, Bulgaria, Spring 2001

> *Contact with victims of prostitution, porn and trafficking has given us information on the long-term harms done to people having been projected on the Internet. Pictures and video films never grow old and can be found on the Internet many years after the actual person has stopped acting in this business, which is seriously violating the person involved. The psychological damage done to victims in this ways is very harmful. You can find pictures 20-30 years old while surfing the web, also images of children being abused. Adults can in that way find pictures of themselves being sexually abused as children many years after the abuse has stopped. And they have no possibility to get these images removed from the Internet, even when they know where they are shown.*[28]

St. Petersburg, Russia has become a center for the production of pornography since the end of the Soviet Union. Representatives from NGOs report that they have heard of many cases of women being forced to make pornography. They say the police will take complaints only if children are used in pornography. Therefore the center can only offer the women psychological counseling, not legal assistance. Many of the women in prostitution in St. Petersburg have also been used to make pornography. [29]

The multi-function agency described above (Virginia! in El-Mari Republic) gives this contradictory message to men who are paying to have nude photographs taken of women:

> *These pictures will be taken by one of our female photographers. None of these pictures will appear anywhere on Internet. The agency is not liable for any use of the photos purchased by you if you request to give copies to ladies. You understand and agree that ladies can post these photos on our web-site or on web-site of any other agencies and also send them to other men.*

The agency seems to be indicating that once the photographs are taken, they can use them in any way the agency wants, although control is attributed to the woman. In reality the woman has little, if any, control of the photographs that have been taken of her.

Through the use of new technologies, new sex-related businesses are opening up that will facilitate the trafficking of images of women.

The following is a case in which the owner plans to open a pornographic Internet business in Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, and possibly Russia. An American NGO representative posing as a potential business partner obtained this information. [30]

The following is the businessman's description of the proposed Internet live Web cam:

> *After 10 years on the internet… we are now going into the highly lucrative LIVE WEBCAM business. This is an opportunity for you to share in an area of the Internet that makes an incredible amount of money.....the Adult Industry! The creation of a website on the Internet that would allow viewers to see, talk and play online with*

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[28] Reden, International Abolitionist Federation, Denmark, Spring 2001.

[29] Interview, St. Petersburg Psychological Crisis Center for Women, 18 August 2001.

[30] Ken Franzblau of Equality Now.

young, beautiful women from Eastern Europe. This website is the first of many (approximately 200) websites that this project will set up throughout Eastern Europe, making the company the largest website chain of its kind on the Internet. This is truly Internet history in the making! (11 July 2001)

Businesses of this sort involve placing multiple cameras that broadcast directly to the Internet in every room of a house so that voyeuristic men can watch women who live there all the time. The following is the promoter's description of his proposed business:

The site will be broadcasting from an actual house, and will allow online viewers an opportunity to view and follow the girls via live internet cameras 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year! All areas of the house will be equipped with online cameras. Viewers from all over the world apply for membership to the website in order to access these cameras. In each room will be two to four cameras that provide sweeping and closeup views of the room and its occupants. Similar setups will be installed in each bathroom, living room, kithcen, dining room, and all other areas. In other words, a member can see, 24 hours a day, what the women who live in the house are doing, anywhere within the dwelling. A member will have a choice of room as well as a choice of camera within a room with which to see. (11 July 2001)

Additional features of this business are private conversations and sessions with the women. The women are expected to perform private sex shows for the viewers.

There will also be "Private Rooms" that are accessed only by special members. Viewers who log on can participate in a group chat with one or more of the girls. A viewer can also request for a "private chat" with a particular girl. There will be 5 to 7 private chat stations located throughout the house. There will also be 1 public or group chat station. This is the real financial backbone of the website. During tests, as well as from industry figures, we have found that the girls each will average 5 of their working hours each day doing private chats. (11 July 2001)

The sexual or pornographic nature of the "private chats" is revealed if you consider that the need for translators is never mentioned.

The following are the list of products and services the business expects to sell to a Western market: As with the marriage agencies, this business expects to market tours for the men to travel to the Eastern European cities to meet women.

Aside from the revenues derived from memberships and chat lines, the models will be promoting and selling:

1. Their individual videos. Each model will have at least 10 personal videos to sell.

2. Their personal lingerie and underwear

3. Trips for website members to meet the girls

4. Personalized 15 second Strip-O-Grams that can be sent via email (we expect this to be very popular among the members because they can send video greetings to others)

5. Gifts that members purchase for the girls (flowers, perfumes, toys, etc.)

6. Personalized erotic videos that the models record and perform on a per-order basis (11 July 2001)

The NGO representative who posed as the potential business partner was interested in obtaining information about the women would be treated. He formulated his questions to give the impression he was interested in protecting his investment by making sure the women performed well.

> *There will be 7 beautiful girls living in the house at any given time. The girls will be changed every 3-4 months to provide members with fresh faces, assure their loyalty to the website and generate repeat business. We intend to replace the girls every 3-4 months, with the exception of the top moneymakers - we will of course, keep them. The reasoning behind this is to promote loyalty with our paying members -they will keep coming back if they know that they will see new girls every so often. By your question about guarantee - if this means can we find girls - the answer, of course, is yes. There are thousands of girls there that would love to have this job. For instance, two weeks ago, we called for a casting in Riga - something that was organzied on the spur of the moment by an agent, and we had over 200 applicants - all of them beautiful! (11 July 2001)*

When the NGO representative pressed for more information on how he could ensure that the women performed to men's satisfaction, this was the response:

> *You have to understand the social situation in Eastern Europe. These girls respect authority, as they are used to it. There is such a demand for work over there that the girls will not jeopardize a "cushy" job such as this, where they can make a lot of money. Girls know that they can be very easily replaced. The average salary anywhere in Eastern Europe is about $100 a month, so the girls are being paid premium money. These girls work hard - because they are ambitious enough to know that they will be rewarded if they do. They are not spoiled brats – at least, not yet - compared to western girls. One very obvious quality that they have, which is starting to fade in the west, is that the girls there are very feminine*. (11 July 2001)

The following is the modeling agreement the business owner said he was going to have the women sign. Note the women are required to work a minimum of 60 hours per week. The work schedule is entirely under the control of the producer. (See No. 6 in contract.) The producer can terminate the contract before the end of the time period, but not the woman. (See No. 2 in contract.) The producer has the right to withhold the woman's pay. The woman can be forced to pay "damages" if she does not perform adequately or breaks the contract (See No. 9). Considering that there is a two-week delay in payment for services and a 30-day delay in payments of commissions, if the woman violates the contract in any way specified by the producer, she will not receive the money she has earned. The agreement also gives the producer the right to use images and videos made of the woman in any way he chooses. (See No. 11.)

MODELING AGREEMENT

This Agreement made this _____ day of _____, 2001, by and between Internet Business Solutions, Producer, and_____ Model and Independent Contractor.

Both parties agree as follows:

1. Producer is in the business of developing, producing and launching webcam website project. This project is intended for the male market throughout the world. Producer intends to produce live and videotaped profiles, photographs and images of Model for sale and broadcast over the internet;

2. Producer requires the services of Model for a minimum period of Three (3) months from the date of this agreement; This period of service may be extended beyond the three month minimum by mutual consent of both parties; or terminated before the three month minimum only by the Producer, depending upon the quality of service the Model supplies;

3. Producer shall provide the following for the Model for the entire duration of Model's service:

a. Housing at the website location

b. Reasonable amount of food

c. Security at the location

4. Further, Producer shall compensate Model for her services US$_____ per month; Compensation shall begin two weeks after Model's service begins, payable every two weeks thereafter;

5. Further, Model shall receive a _____ Percent (____%) commission on sales of products on the internet, including: Private Chat time, videos, photographs, gifts, emailgrams and others, except for membership fees and dues. Commissions are paid thirty (30) days after the sale;

6. Model is expected to render services 6 days a week at the website location, and for at least 10 hours each day. Service schedule shall be determined by Producer;

7. Model is an independent contractor, and as such, shall be responsible for any and all taxes and other government obligations resulting from her earnings from this project;

8. The success of this project depends, among other factors, on the Model's ability to project an image on the internet that is pleasing to the viewers, and it is therefore the Model's responsibility to maintain her physical appearance and personality relevant to the service she is selected to perform;

9. Model shall pay Producer for damages to Producer's business that may result from Model's inability to perform service, or for terminating the agreement before its

maturity; Producer maintains the right to withhold Model's compensation and commissions for any violation of this agreement;

10. Producer shall post a "Rules and Regulations" notice at the location prior to the commencement of Model's services so that there shall be no misunderstanding of expectations of the Model's performance of service.

11. By signing this agreement, Model hereby grants Producer permission to develop, produce, photograph, videotape, broadcast and sell Model's live image, videotape and photographs over the internet and by mail and live broadcast.

In the agreement it also states that the producer will post "rules and regulations" that must be followed. In brothels and escort services there are often a long list of rules aimed at controlling the women. The rules are often so restrictive that it is difficult to avoid breaking some of them. The fines are often very high. The goal is not only control of the women, but a way to deny full compensation to the women. If the women are not paid fully one week, they can become indebted, or further indebted, to the pimp, thereby preventing them from leaving.

The following are business details about the Internet business, which include references to political protection:

Producer shall incorporate this project offshore, and banking and revenue disbursements shall come from an offshore account. As in the United States, independent contractors are outside the scope of regular employment. Further, no one really pays attention to these things in Eastern Europe. As long as the company pays taxes (and believe me, probably 70% of the companies there do not), no one will bother you. Also, I told you before that we have excellent connections there, which include both government and public. (19 July 2001)

The lack of control women have of images taken of them is seen in one posting from a woman who had been used to make amputee pornography. She posted a public message on another site in St. Petersburg:

The amputee whos name is Masha … is fighting with Madame to remove all her pics from the site and not to sell her videos anymore. Volkova refuses to do it. Olga P. wrote a brief note on St Petersburg "Amputy" site: "I'm not a model of Tatiana Volkova anymore."

As discussed in the previous report "The Impact of the Use of New Communications and Information Technologies on Trafficking in Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation: A Study of the Users" there is almost no intervention in adult pornography, especially on the Internet. At this point, there seems to be little that can be done to stop the distribution of pornographic images made of women, especially if the woman signed an agreement or release.

Conclusion

As was mentioned in the introduction, the information gathered is partial, but there are strong indications that at least some marriage agencies and introduction services are involved in the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. It is important in the future to be able to document a few cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation that go beyond domestic violence to trafficking for the sex industry. With such evidence, the case could be made for including marriage agencies in trafficking prevention and awareness programs. A problem subsequent to connecting marriage agencies to the trafficking of women is getting lawmakers and law enforcement agencies to act against it. In Russia, there is no law against the trafficking in women. In Ukraine, quite adequate laws against trafficking have been passed, but there is weak enforcement.

A response to the trafficking of pornographic images of women raises steep challenges. There would be no problem in getting cases in which women claim that images have been made against their will. Neither would there be a problem finding women who claim nude or pornographic images of them were posted on the Internet against their will. The problem is that women have not been able to get law enforcement or the courts to agree that harm has been done or that legal action can or should be taken.

One of the exceptions to this general attitude of the courts is Judge Jean-Jacques Gomez's ruling earlier this year in the case in which an actress sued to have pornographic photographs taken of her years ago removed from the Internet. He ruled in the woman's favor saying that she did have a right to have the images removed, even though she had signed a contract when the photographs were taken. The case was being appealed.

Although trafficking in women for sexual exploitation and the trafficking in images of sexual exploitation are very closely related, if not the same thing, they are viewed and treated very differently. Internationally, there has been progress in raising awareness and acting against the physical trafficking in women for sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, the trend has been just the opposite for trafficking in images of sexual exploitation. Most people see the reduction or elimination of prosecution of adult pornography as being a victory for the individual rights of people and an end to suppressive government enforcement of morality based laws. They assume all women in pornography are consenting, even when the women are visibly injured. If a woman protests after a photograph has been taken or a video made, people assume she consented at the time, but now is embarrassed by other people seeing it. Or they blame the victim and say she shouldn't have been so silly as to allow such photographs to be taken in the first place.

In connection to the use of new technologies, there is fatalistic assumption that nothing can be done when it involves the Internet. Because of the libertarian culture on the Internet and the lack of intervention in the past, people have developed the attitude that it isn't possible to stop anything. This view is promoted by the sex industry and Internet industry as well. They have broadcast the message so often that the Internet can't be "censored," that most people believe it is impossible to intervene in any way.

Although new techniques are being developed all the time through communications and information technologies, the basic challenge remains the same – how to ensure the right of women and children to be free of sexual exploitation. Technology is providing new ways to traffic women for sexual exploitation and new ways to transmit the images of sexual exploitation. The new technologies present new challenges to lawmakers, law enforcement, and international cooperation, but I don't believe you can solve the problem in cyberspace without solving the problem in every local community. It is only when basic human rights, including the right to be free of violence and sexual exploitation, are ensured to all people that the problem will be solved.

Map Section

Map 1 Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Countries of the Former Soviet Union

Map 2 Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in the Russian Federation, by Oblast

Map 3 Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Ukraine, by Oblast

Map 4 Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Belarus, by Oblast

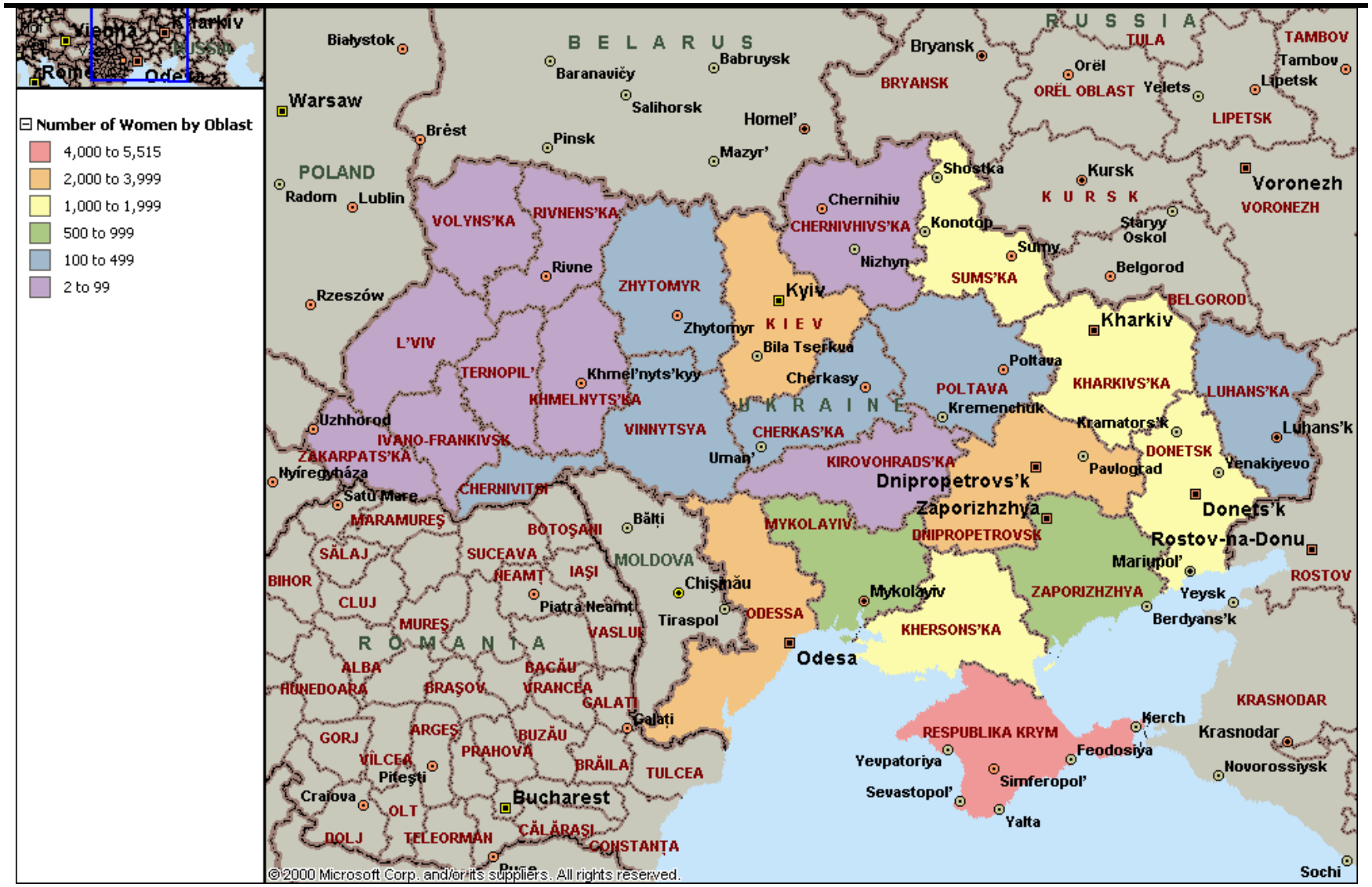
Map 1

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Countries of the Former Soviet Union

Map 2
Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in the Russian Federation, by Oblast

Map 3

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Ukraine, by Oblast



Map 4

Women Recruited by Marriage Agencies in Belarus, by Voblast